



Integrated Management Navigation System • Standard Accounting and Reporting System

I-MANAGE STARS Communiqué



DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY STARS

July 2004

Hot Topics

STARS Navigation Tutorial now available

A STARS Navigation Tutorial is now available for future STARS users. Headquarters users were introduced on July 20, 2004; Oak Ridge users on July 27, 2004; and field users will have access in early August. The STARS Navigation Tutorial is a self-paced, web based training that guides users through the steps to log on to STARS, choose the function to be performed, enter a basic transaction, search for information, and run standard reports. Since the STARS Navigation Tutorial is a prerequisite for all Instructor Led Training, it is strongly encouraged that users take the Tutorial prior to September 2004 to avoid delays in registering for classroom training.

The STARS Navigation Tutorial takes approximately 6-hours to complete and is self-paced; users may exit and re-enter the tutorial at any time. By allowing users to take the STARS Navigation Tutorial in sections, all users will have the opportunity to complete the Navigation Tutorial before classroom training begins in September. Management has identified the staff that will be required to take the STARS Navigation tutorial. If you have not been contacted by August 15, 2004, and feel that you should be included in the tutorial, please send an e-mail to STARS@hq.doe.gov. This e-mail should contain the user's name, the name of the user's direct supervisor, their field location, and the functions that the user will need to perform in STARS.

For managers and staff who are predominantly report users (i.e. do not enter accounting transactions), I-MANAGE Data Warehouse (IDW) training courses will be offered. These training classes are designed to accommodate the information requirements for this audience. The IDW will provide more timely data than the current FDW. Information on IDW training will be available in upcoming IDW Communiqués. To subscribe to the IDW communiqué, send an e-mail with the word "subscribe" in the subject line to IDW@hq.doe.gov.

UAT Status Update

The current phase of the STARS implementation is User Acceptance Testing (UAT). As previously reported the first round of UAT began on May 3, 2004 and ended on June 11, 2004. The data conversion effort for the second round of UAT began on June 14 with the actual testing beginning on July 6 in Germantown, Maryland.

The second round of testing will continue through July 30 with the goal of running through all 341 test cases to retest or ensure fixes from the first round of UAT. Thirty-five users from the Field and Headquarters are using June data for processing financial transactions in STARS.

The results of UAT will lead to either a "Go" or "No Go" decision on July 31st by I-MANAGE Program Management and the outcome presented to the Executive Steering Committee on August 15th. Data conversions continue to be tested by the STARS Team to ensure accuracy.



STARS - How does this affect me?

STARS End Users

With the implementation of STARS rapidly approaching, many future STARS end users have been e-mailing to inquire about the benefits of this new system. This article will cover a few of the improvements the new STARS system offers as part of the I-MANAGE Program.

The I-MANAGE Program was created to increase operational efficiency as part of the President's Management Agenda. STARS, a component of the I-MANAGE program, will completely transform the way DOE processes and uses financial information by moving from a purely transaction based accounting system, to one that provides more automation, thus allowing more time for analysis. STARS will automatically populate accounting information across transactions. For example, instead of re-entering a cost entry, STARS pulls that entry information to the accounts payable invoice, thereby eliminating potential errors and re-work.

STARS also greatly improves the current systems by recording entries in Standard General Ledger (SGL) format. In STARS, all accounts will be SGL-based for entries and reporting, eliminating the need for a BSC-to-SGL crosswalk. This will save time and decrease the maintenance required for external reporting. STARS is a consolidated system that includes data from all sites and will reduce the number of steps necessary for consolidated reporting compared to the current system that requires consolidation of data from 3 DISCAS Service Centers.

Monthly Spotlight - Fixed Assets Module

Each month the Communiqué highlights a new component of STARS or an upcoming activity of interest. This month, new features in the STARS Fixed Assets Module are spotlighted. Bill McSpadden (ORO) leads the STARS Fixed Assets Team.

The STARS Fixed Assets Module stores capital asset information to properly track and manage DOE's property, plant, and equipment, and the costs associated with them. The Fixed Assets module also calculates depreciation based on the asset category. The STARS Fixed Assets Module has many advanced features including the ability to rapidly add an asset using the Quick Additions menu and the ability to do mass additions and transfers. Like all other fixed asset entries, these features will automatically generate the appropriate entries into the General Ledger (GL) to create a full audit trail. This makes querying Fixed Asset entries in the GL much easier in STARS than it has previously been in DISCAS. Instead of having to run multiple queries for account and asset type information, STARS consolidates the journal entry for an asset and records it as a single line item.

There are many differences between how fixed assets are processed in DISCAS and how they will be processed in STARS. Most noticeably, STARS uses a logical organization of many screens to collect transactional data, whereas DISCAS records all data on one page. This means that adding, transferring, or retiring an asset will require more screens to enter the transaction in STARS. However, the fields on each screen are grouped in a more logical and user-friendly way. "When first introduced to the Fixed Assets module, I was a bit intimidated at the navigational process -- there were multiple screens with multiple buttons on each screen. However, after becoming acquainted with the module, I have found the navigation to be quite intuitive," said Bill McSpadden (ORO) the STARS Fixed Assets Team Lead.

Another big difference between STARS and DISCAS is how depreciation is tracked. Non-Fund accounts (such as Fund Type 51) will not be used in STARS; instead depreciation will be tracked against the fund source that purchased the asset. These differences mean changes to the way fixed assets are processed at the Department, but with big changes come great improvements and efficiencies, and the STARS Team is confident that STARS end-users will like the new look.

Deployment Plan to incorporate Accounting Transition Milestones

The milestones in the Accounting Transition Plan will be integrated with the Deployment Plan activities to consolidate all STARS Implementation Team activities into one planning document. The DISCAS data clean up addressed by the Accounting Transition Plan is one of 30 key areas addressed by the Deployment Plan. This activity continues to be critical to STARS implementation. The continued focus of Headquarters and Field staff to ensure that data integrity issues are resolved prior to DISCAS year-end closing is imperative to this effort.

Myth versus Fact

Many of you have been telling us about rumors and hallway chatter you have been hearing about STARS. To separate truth from fiction, we are continuing the series, STARS Myth versus Fact. If you have heard a rumor about STARS that you would like to see addressed in future issues of the STARS Communiqué, please email your suggestions to STARS@hq.doe.gov.

Myth: Users don't have anywhere to go to learn more about the advantages of STARS.

Fact: Interested stakeholders have a multitude of ways to find out more about STARS.

In addition to a monthly STARS Communiqué and bi-weekly email series, there is extensive information on STARS on the I-MANAGE website: www.mbe.doe.gov/me2-5/i-manage. A wealth of information is posted here, including information such as frequently asked questions (FAQ's), previous issues of the STARS Communiqué, and guidance and memorandums outlining actions that need to be taken by the field offices, such as data clean up and SGL training.

As promised, the first STARS training opportunity, the Navigation Tutorial, began rolling out to the field in July. Identified users of STARS will receive information on registering for the tutorial by email from I-Learning. In addition, STARS training classes will be available in September for those end users with a need to enter transactional data in the new system.

For specific questions or to sign up for the STARS communiqué distribution list, please send an email to STARS@hq.doe.gov.

STARS Project Information

I-MANAGE Program Site: <http://www.mbe.doe.gov/ME2-5/i-manage/INDEX.HTM>

STARS Project Site: <http://www.me.doe.gov/STARS>

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